Blood Bank

3557. SHRI I.D. SWAMI : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government and some of the State Governments have not been able to remove the deficiencies from their blood banks even after one year of the Supreme Court directions and 596 such blood banks are on the verge of closure;

(b) is so, the reasons for the failure of the Union Government and the State Governments to act on the orders of the Supreme Court; and

(c) whether Government propose to ensure the uninterrupted supply of blood to the needy people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERVANI) : (a) to (c) It is not true that 596 blood banks are on the verge of closure. The various deficiencies reported of such blood banks are in the process of rectification. As such Central Government had moved the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India to extend the time for grant of licences and the Hon'ble Supreme Court has extended the time limit for three months from 17th February, 1997. The extension of time was sought to ensure the compliance of one of the Supreme Court directions that only licensed blood banks should operate in the country. With this extension of time, it will be possible for more blood banks get themselves licensed so as to ensure availability of uninterrupted supply of blood to the needy people.

Historical Relics

3558. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN :
SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are considering to undertake archaeological excavation at Pillak and Boxanagar in the State of Tripura where there are immense possibilities of finding of rich historical relics;

(b) whether any steps have been taken towards this direction; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Archaeological Survey of India conducted exploration and excavation at these sites in 1948-85 and recovered important archaeological relics. There is no proposal to conduct further excavations.

[Translation]

Ajmer-Ahmedabad National Highway

3559. SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to construct four lanes on National Highway No. 8 on Ajmer-Byawar-Udaipur-Ratanpur-Ahmedabad Road by widening it; and

(b) if so, the time by which this work is likely to commence and completed?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal is at feasibility stage and hence it is too early to give details.

Subsidy on Pilgrimage

3560. SHRI VIJAY GOEL :
SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the total subsidy provided by the Government to Haj pilgrims during the last three years, year-wise and per capita details thereof;

(b) whether the amount of subsidy has been increased for the current year (1997);

(c) if so, the amount thereof and the reasons therefor;

(d) whether any subsidy is given to the pilgrims of Kailash Mansarovar also;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor;

(f) whether subsidy is provided to the pilgrims of any other Hindu pilgrimage; and

(g) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) No subsidy is given directly to the Haj pilgrims. Government fixes a Haj pilgrim fare which is generally lower than the fare calculated on the basis of actual expenditure, the difference constituting the subsidy borne by the Government on account of Haj transportation arrangements and paid directly to the Air Charter. In addition, Government depute administrative and medical contingents (doctors and paramedics) to Saudi Arabia and also supply medicines and attendant medical facilities such as ambulances, camp dispensaries etc., to attend to the needs of the Haj pilgrims. Government subsidised travel of pilgrims to

Saudi Arabia for the Haj during the last three years as under :

Year	Number of Pilgrims	Expenditure Incurred (Rs.)	Per Capita Expenditure (Rs.)
1994	25,685	24.69 crores	9612.00
1995	30,503	17.95 crores	5884.00
1996	50,346	42.02 crores	8346.00

(b) The amount of subsidy on air travel for Haj pilgrimage has not been determined for 1997.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) In 1996, Government decided to peg the amount payable to Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) by pilgrims at the rate of Rs. 5000/- per pilgrim. The total cost charged by KMVN was Rs. 8250/-. Thus, the Government provided a subsidy of Rs. 3250/- per pilgrim to KMVN towards board, Dodge and transport arrangements. Government also provides other facilities to pilgrims which include medical assistance, security and escort cover through ITBP and UP State Police, communication links between Delhi and places en route on the Indian side as well as in China and a Liaison Officer at Government cost with each batch of pilgrim.

(f) and (g) In the case of Sikh/Sehajdhari and Hindu Jathas from India to Pakistan, Government extends all required assistance, obtains approval of the Government of Pakistan for the visit of each Jatha; coordinates with various State Governments/Ministries/Authorities and forwards the lists of intending pilgrims to the Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi for visas; arranges with the Ministry of Railways special train services for the pilgrims both for onward/return journey; expedites release of foreign exchange from Reserve Bank of India as a special case in view of the fact that permission for Jathas is given at short notice and visas are stamped on the pilgrims' passports which is one or two days prior to the departure of the Jathas; attaches a Liaison Officer from the High Commission of India in Islamabad to render assistance to the visiting pilgrims when they contact for any kind of help etc.

Science Centres

3561. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have set up Science Centres in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and the criteria prescribed for setting up of these Science Centres;

(c) whether the Government propose to set up Science Centre at Saharasa in Koshi area of Bihar; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) to (d) National Council of Science Museums, with its Headquarters at Calcutta, is engaged in setting up of large, medium and small Science Centres throughout the country. The details of the 26 Science Centres which have been set up so far are given in the attached statement.

For setting up of Science Centres, the concerned State Government is required to offer land free of cost and to bear 50% of the development cost.

Neither the Council has any proposal nor any request from the State Government has been received.

Statement

1. Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, Calcutta (West Bengal).
2. Central Research and Training Laboratory, Calcutta (West Bengal).
3. District Science Centre, Purulia (West Bengal).
4. Science Centre, Bardhaman, (West Bengal).
5. Sciene City (Convention Centre Only) (West Bengal).
6. Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum, Bangalore (Karnataka).
7. District Science Centre, Gulbarga (Karnataka)
8. Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai (Maharashtra).
9. Raman Science Centre and Planetarium, Nagpur (Maharashtra).
10. National Science Centre, Delhi (Delhi).
11. Shrikrishna Science Centre, Patna (Bihar).
12. Regional Science Centre, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).
13. Regional Science Centre, Bhubaneswar (Orissa).
14. Science Centre, Dhenkanal (Orissa).
15. Kapilas Science Park, Kapilas (Orissa).
16. Regional Science Centre, Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh).
17. District Science Centre, Dharampur (Gujarat).
18. District Science Centre, Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu).
19. Regional Science Centre, Guwahati (Assam).
20. Regional Science Centre, Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh).
21. Science Activity Corner, Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh).